

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER "LGBT"

PRIDE MONTH



“ The LGBT rights movement has achieved great progress, but there is more work to be done. LGBT youth should feel safe to learn without the fear of harassment, and LGBT families and seniors should be allowed to live their lives with dignity and respect. ”

President Barack Obama

“ This June, let us recommit ourselves to achieving a world in which all people can live in safety and freedom, no matter who they are or whom they love. ”

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton



In the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), which involved a law making homosexual conduct a crime, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law finding that it violated the constitutional right to liberty. The Court declared, "Liberty presumes an autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct. The instant case involves liberty of the person both in its spatial and more transcendent dimensions." The court ruled that homosexuals are entitled "to respect for their private lives" and "to retain their dignity as free persons."

Lesbian: female homosexual

Gay: male homosexual

Bisexual: a person with attraction to both sexes

Transgender: a person who feels more comfortable as the opposite sex

FROM STONEWALL TO THE RAINBOW FLAG

1924 The Society for Human Rights in Chicago becomes the country's earliest known gay rights organization.

1962 Illinois becomes the first state in the union to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults in private.

1969 The Stonewall rebellion takes place in New York City.



On the evening of 28 June 1969, a gay bar in New York City called the Stonewall Inn was raided by police, who harassed and arrested patrons. Outraged patrons and community supporters rioted for three days at the Stonewall to demand an end to oppression and to demand equality.

The Stonewall Rebellion gave rise to the gay rights movement in the United States, which has inspired movements worldwide. During the month of June, we commemorate the events of June 1969 and commit to achieve equal justice for all. Pride Month celebrates diversity and liberty.

THE RAINBOW FLAG HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY USED AND RECOGNIZED SYMBOLS OF THE GAY PRIDE MOVEMENT. DEVELOPED BY SAN FRANCISCO ARTIST GILBERT BAKER IN 1978, THE COLORS ARE RED (LIFE), ORANGE (HEALING), YELLOW (SUNLIGHT), GREEN (NATURE), TURQUOISE (MAGIC), AND INDIGO/BLEU (SERENITY).



THE PINK TRIANGLE IS A SYMBOL TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS. PEOPLE CONVICTED UNDER AN ANTI-HOMOSEXUAL LAW WERE LABELED ACCORDING TO THEIR CRIMES BY WEARING INVERTED COLORED TRIANGLES IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS; HOMOSEXUAL PRISONERS WORE PINK TRIANGLES. IN THE 1970S, THE PINK TRIANGLE BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF GAY PRIDE AND THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

GENDER SYMBOLS: THE ASTROLOGICAL SYMBOLS FOR MARS (A CIRCLE WITH AN ARROW POINTING OFF TO THE UPPER RIGHT) AND VENUS (A CIRCLE WITH A DESCENDING CROSS) HAVE LONG BEEN USED AS SIGNS FOR MEN AND WOMEN. THE MOST COMMONLY SEEN GAY PRIDE SYMBOLS ARE DOUBLE FIGURES OF EACH SIGN, SIGNIFYING SAME-SEX LOVE.



LAMBDA: THE LOWER-CASE GREEK LETTER LAMBDA WAS ORIGINALLY CHOSEN BY THE GAY ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK IN 1970. THE LAMBDA SYMBOL SOON BECAME A QUICK WAY FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY TO IDENTIFY EACH OTHER. THE SYMBOL WAS USED BECAUSE IT WAS INCONSPICUOUS, AND SIMILAR TO THE USE OF GREEK LETTERS IN COLLEGE FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES.

"DON'T ASK DON'T TELL"

U.S. policy prohibits any homosexual or bisexual person from disclosing his or her sexual orientation or from speaking about any homosexual relationships, including marriages or other familial attributes, while serving in the United States armed forces.

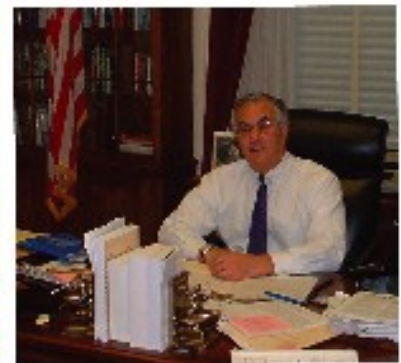
ACCOMPLISHED LGBT AMERICANS

1973 American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders.

1982 Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

1993 The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is put in place for the U.S. military permitting gays to serve in the military but prohibiting them from disclosing their sexual orientation.

“Frankly, if you're a straight person in Massachusetts, [same sex-marriage] has had no impact on you, unless you live next door to a couple of lesbians and you'd have to buy them a present.”



Barney Frank, Congressman (D - MA),
Chairman, House Financial Services Committee.



Tennessee Williams, Playwright, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes,
two Nobel Prizes, and a Tony Award.

“I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.”
A line from A Streetcar Named Desire



Susan Sontag, Author, philosopher,
literary theorist and political activist.

“What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine;
what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine.”



James Baldwin, Novelist, writer, playwright,
poet, essayist and civil rights activist.

“Everybody's journey is individual. If you fall in love with a boy, you fall in love with a boy. The fact that many Americans consider it a disease says more about them than it does about homosexuality.”

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any. For in the end, freedom is a personal and lonely battle; and one faces down fears of today so that those of tomorrow might be engaged.”



Alice Walker, Writer,
winner of a Pulitzer Prize for fiction

ACCOMPLISHED LGBT AMERICANS

1996 In *Romer v. Evans*, the Supreme Court strikes down Colorado's Amendment 2, which denied protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

2000 Vermont becomes the first state in the country to legally recognize civil unions between gay or lesbian couples.

2003 The Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* effectively invalidates anti-homosexual sodomy laws in the United States.

“LGBT Americans have made, and continue to make, great and lasting contributions that continue to strengthen the fabric of American Society.”

President Barack Obama



Margaret Cho, Comedian

“If we have the opportunity to be generous with our hearts, ourselves, we have no idea of the depth and breadth of love's reach.”

“The phone didn't ring for three years. I had no offers. Yet I was getting letters from kids who had almost committed suicide but didn't because of what I did. I realized I had a purpose and it wasn't just about me and celebrity.”

Speaking of the backlash that ensued after she announced she was a lesbian to the public.



Ellen DeGeneres, Talk-show host winning eleven Emmy Awards.



Greg Louganis, Diver, Olympic gold medalist and six time World Champion.

“Being gay and being in sports isn't supposed to mix. I think I proved that wrong!”

In 1973, a time when women's tennis was not as prestigious as men's, male tennis champion Bobby Riggs boasted that, though past his prime, he could beat any woman. Ms. King accepted the challenge, and the match, amidst much media hype, came to be called “The Battle of the Sexes”. King beat Riggs in three straight sets.



Billie Jean King, Tennis Player, won six Wimbledon singles championships and four U.S. Open titles and was ranked No. 1 in the world for five years.



Andy Warhol, Painter, printmaker, filmmaker, and leader in the visual arts movement.

“Everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.”



Christine Jorgensen

Christine Jorgensen was the first widely-known individual to have changed sex through surgery, in her case from male to female. On arriving in New York in 1953 after her surgery and hormone therapy in Denmark, she said she was happy to be home. “What American woman wouldn't be?” she asked.

ACTIVISTS AND ALLIES

2003 Same-sex marriages become legal in Massachusetts.

2005 Civil unions become legal in Connecticut.

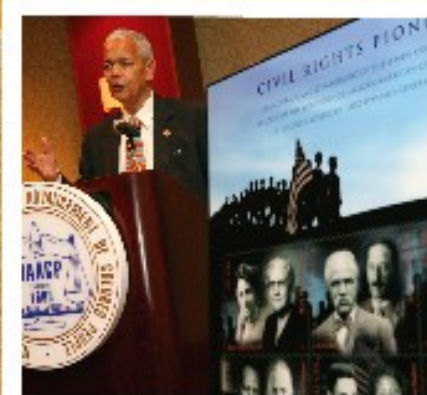
2007 Civil unions become legal in New Jersey.



Harvey Milk, Politician and first openly gay man elected to public office in California

Referring to the gay struggle for civil rights in the 1970s, he said in a speech shortly before he was assassinated in 1978: "For the first time in the history of the world, everybody was talking about the gay movement, good or bad. Unless you have dialogue, unless you open the walls of dialogue, you cannot break down the prejudice."

"When someone asks me, 'are gay rights civil rights?' my answer is always, 'Of course, they are.' Civil rights are positive legal prerogatives: the right to equal treatment before the law. These are the rights shared by everyone. There is no one in the United States who does not, or should not, enjoy or share in enjoying these rights. Gay and lesbian rights are not special rights in any way. It isn't 'special' to be free from discrimination. It is an ordinary, universal entitlement of citizenship."



Jesse Boyd, social activist and leader of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)



Judy Shepard, Executive Director of the Matthew Shepard Foundation, Advocate for LGBT rights.

Her son Matthew Shepard was the victim of a hate crime. On October 7, 1998, twenty-one year old Matthew was tied to a split-rail fence where he was beaten and left to die in the cold of the night, dying five days later. During the trial, the witnesses stated Shepard had been targeted for being gay. In response to this incident, Judy Shepard established the Matthew Shepard Foundation, dedicated to issues of social justice, and she was instrumental in the passing of a hate crime bill, known as the Matthew Shepard Act, which passed the house in a 249 to 175 victory for equality. The next step is the Senate.

HATE CRIME

A crime motivated by prejudice against a social group

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

2008 A New York state appeals court unanimously votes that valid same-sex marriages performed in other states must be recognized by employers in New York.

Oregon passes a law that allows same-sex couples to register as domestic partners.

The California Supreme Court rules that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry



Millennium March, Washington DC

2009 The Iowa State Supreme Court rules that the law banning same sex marriage is unconstitutional.

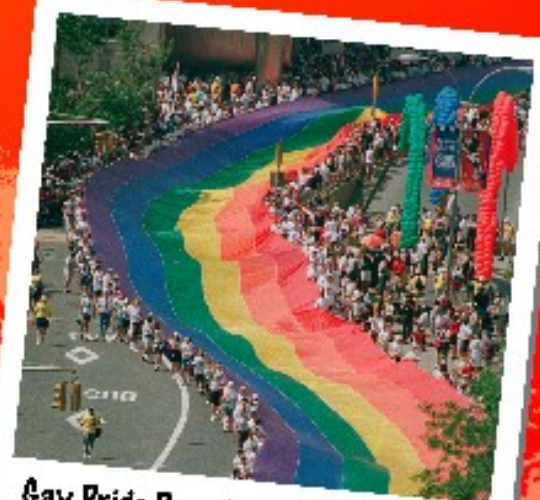
The California Supreme Court upholds the voter-approved Proposition 8, which outlaws same-sex marriage. Supporters of same-sex marriage announce that they will take the case to the Federal courts.

Same-sex marriages become legal in Connecticut and Maine. A bill legalizing same-sex marriage bill passed in New Hampshire will go into effect in January 2010.

The LGBT struggle for equal rights has been long and is continuing. Despite tremendous progress in recent years, fear and hatred of and discrimination and violence against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons persist.

President Obama has taken a stand on the challenges and come out with policies regarding:

- Enhance hate crime laws
- Support civil unions and Federal Rights for LGBT couples
- Outlaw discrimination in the workplace
- Ensure adoption rights
- End discrimination against gays and lesbians in the Armed Forces



Gay Pride Parade, New York City,
25 years after Stonewall

CIVIL UNION

Legally-recognized union that grants same-sex couples certain rights, benefits and responsibilities but is different from marriage.